

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

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Claim 1. (*Canceled*)

Claim 2. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said dorsal portion extends from the outer sole substantially up to a top end of the external upper.

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Claim 3. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said at least one lateral portion comprises two substantially symmetrical lateral arms.

Claim 4. (*Currently Amended*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein each of said at least one lateral portion is fixed to the outer sole by a connecting lug, substantially in an ~~said~~ area of the metatarsophalangeal joint of the foot.

Claim 5. (*Currently Amended*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein at least said lateral portion includes a tightening arrangement for tightening the boot on the user's foot and lower leg.

Claim 6. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the dorsal portion laterally comprises at least one lug having a tightening arrangement and is on a level with the top of the external upper.

Claim 7. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the dorsal portion laterally comprises two substantially symmetrical lugs.

Claim 8. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the flexible frame is fixed, at each of its lower ends, to the external upper and to the outer sole.

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Claim 9. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein for a conventional assembly, with the upper having a lasting allowance between an insole and the outer sole, each of the lower ends of the frame is fixed to the lasting allowance.

Claim 10. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein each of the lower ends of the frame is fixed by a seam on the lower end of the external upper.

Claim 11. (*Currently Amended*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the frame is fixed on the external upper by ~~a seam~~ stitching.

Claim 12. (*Original*) A sports boot according to claim 3, wherein each lateral arm is fixed to the upper, and to the sole, respectively, only by its connecting lugs and conserves an entire elastically deformable free portion.

Claim 13. (*Currently Amended*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the flexible frame of the external upper extends upwardly to an area adapted to be above the ankle of the user and at an area adapted to be at ~~region to~~ about a middle region of a tibia of the user.

Claim 14. (*Canceled*)

Claim 15. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the flexible frame comprises lateral arms in the form of flat bands oriented so as to provide a predetermined moment of inertia during a forward bending.

Claim 16. (*Canceled*)

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Claim 17. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the dorsal portion comprises a notch whose lower end opens out on a recess between the dorsal portion and the outer sole.

Claim 18. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the dorsal portion constitutes a rear piece, and the dorsal portion including at least one lug, and at least one lateral arm constitutes a front piece, and wherein the front piece includes appropriate fixing means for fixing the front piece on the rear piece, at the level of the dorsal portion.

Claim 19. (*Withdrawn*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein each external lateral arm is furthermore connected to the dorsal portion by a connecting lug oriented substantially along the flexion fold.

Claim 20. (*Withdrawn*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the dorsal portion has a bottom portion that is flared so as to surround the heel.

Claim 21. (*Canceled*)

Claim 22. (*Canceled*)

Claim 23. (*Canceled*)

Claim 24. (*Currently Amended*) A sports boot comprising:

an outer sole; and

an external upper overlying said outer sole to cover a user's foot and lower leg, said external upper comprising a flexible frame made of a substantially non-stretchable material and affixed to said external upper and said outer sole, said flexible frame comprising a dorsal portion extending upwardly above an ~~ankle region~~ area adapted to cover an ankle of the user, said dorsal portion being adapted to cover at a rear of the user's lower leg, and said flexible frame further comprising at least one elongated lateral portion extending laterally forwardly from said dorsal portion, at least a part of said lateral portion of said flexible frame being spaced above said ~~outer external~~ sole, another part of said lateral portion of said flexible frame being connected to said ~~outer external~~ sole proximate an area adapted to cover of a metatarsophalangeal joint of the user's foot, ~~said flexible frame not extending through a lower surface of said outer sole~~ foot.

Claim 25. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said substantially non-stretchable material comprises a polymer.

Claim 26. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 25, wherein said polymer comprises a member selected from the group consisting of polyvinylchloride, polyamide, polyethylene, and polyurethane.

Claim 27. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said at least one lateral portion and said dorsal portion of said flexible frame are formed as unitary.

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Claim 28. (*Canceled*)

Claim 29. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein the flexible frame is made of a non-leather material.

Claim 30. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 29, wherein said material is a polymer.

Claim 31. (*Canceled*)

Claim 32. (*Canceled*)

Claim 33. (*Currently Amended*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said dorsal portion of said flexible frame is spaced above said outer ~~external~~ sole.

Claim 34. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said flexible frame is arranged external of said external upper.

Claim 35. (*Previously Presented*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said flexible frame is arranged internal of said external upper.

31 Claim 36. (*New*) A sports boot according to claim 24, wherein said flexible frame does not extend through a lower surface of said outer sole.

Claim 37. (*New*) A sports boot according to claim 13, wherein said flexible frame does not extend through a lower surface of said outer sole.

Claim 38. (*New*) A sports boot according to claim 33, wherein said flexible frame does not extend through a lower surface of said outer sole.

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